

ALL

SUMMER 2023

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With owner Maria Soriano by her side, Muñeca is examined by veterinarian Ronaldo Joey Vasquez as part of the Pets for Life program.

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JUSTICE FOR PEOPLE AND PETS

When we meet people where they are and provide accessible pet care services, we strengthen the bond between people and their pets. This year, the HSUS is expanding the conversation about pet equity—and we'd love you to join us.

By Kelly L. Williams

COVER CAPTION: Magdalena Hernández cuddles pup Palomo during a visit from the Pets for Life/Los Angeles team in April.

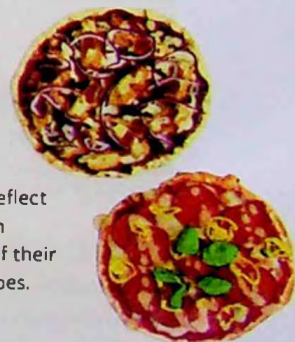
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PLANT-BASED COMFORT FOOD

Two generations of vegans reflect on the food that brings them together—and share a few of their favorite crowd-pleasing recipes.

By Bethany W. Adams



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What's your favorite plant-based comfort food?

"Borscht and potato pancakes!"



"I drink coffee with non-dairy caramel macchiato creamer every morning!"



"Sweet potato tots with maple syrup. It has to be sweet potato, not regular potato!"



"I love the 'Best Vegan Alfredo' recipe from thevegan8.com. It's absolutely delicious on pasta, pizzas and added to homemade potato soup."

"Oat milk in a glass I keep in the freezer for the optimum temp!"

ALL ANIMALS

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All Animals tells the story of the Humane Society family of organizations and the animal protection movement. As advocacy journalists, we use facts, reason and compelling imagery to inspire readers to join our fight for all animals. We highlight our common ground with millions of people around the world who believe that animals deserve compassion.

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The Humane Society family of organizations works to end the cruelest practices toward animals, care for animals in crisis, build a stronger animal protection movement and create a better, more compassionate world.



President and CEO Kitty Block visits with a cat rescued from an alleged neglect situation in Indiana.

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Whatever you're
 doing to make the
 world a better
 place for animals,
 thank you.



THE VERY SAME WEEK THIS ISSUE of *All Animals* went to print, our family of organizations received major news we'd been hoping for: The Supreme Court decided to uphold Proposition 12, California's landmark animal protection law.

We told you about the fight for Proposition 12 in our Spring '23 issue ("Their day in court," p. 16), and we've been waiting for the decision since the case was argued in October. Proposition 12—which was approved by 63% of California voters in 2018—requires that mother pigs, hens used for eggs and calves raised for veal be given at least enough space to stand up, turn around and extend their limbs. The law also bans the in-state sale of pork, eggs and veal produced through extreme confinement. Ever since we and our allies ensured the passage of Proposition 12, we have been defending it against some producers seeking to overturn it.

We were thrilled that the Court unanimously rejected the pork industry's primary claim (and also rejected their secondary claim in a split opinion), but we're even more thrilled that billions of animals will not have to suffer in extreme confinement. You can read more about what this historic decision means in a future issue of *All Animals* or on my blog at blog.humanesociety.org.

This victory is thanks to advocates from all corners of our organization—and beyond. Policy experts collaborated on the ballot measure our legal team eventually drafted—and then defended in the courts when it was challenged. Advocates worked on the ground in California to ensure the measure passed, while communications experts ensured the issue received the media attention it deserved.

This collaboration reminds me that our movement requires everyone bringing their skills to work on behalf of animals—including everyday advocates like you.

We all have a part to play in this movement. Maybe you share plant-based meals with your loved ones, like the mother-daughter pair in "Bringing nostalgia to the plant-based table" (p. 20). Perhaps you volunteer with your local shelter or rescue. Or maybe you reach out to legislators in support of animal-friendly legislation. (We've got an opportunity for you to do just that on p. 11!)

And if your contribution to the movement is a financial one, know that your generosity enables the professionals to keep changing the world for animals. So when you read about our team reuniting animals with their families in Türkiye after devastating earthquakes (p. 8), pushing for a federal ban on farming mink for their fur (p. 10), and ensuring people have the resources they need to care for their pets (p. 14), you should feel proud that you've helped us achieve all this progress.

Whatever you're doing to make the world a better place for animals, thank you. And if you're looking to level up your advocacy, you might be interested in Taking Action for Animals, the conference that invites volunteers and animal advocates to network and learn together. We're gathering in Springfield, Illinois, this August, and we'd love to have you. You can learn more at takingactionforanimals.org.

I hope to see you there, but if not—thank you for all you do. Together, we're making this movement an unstoppable one.

Kitty Block
 President and CEO, the Humane Society
 of the United States
 CEO, Humane Society International and
 Humane Society Legislative Fund

"We are guilty as a culture—not as an industry but as a culture—of looking at cats through dog-colored glasses and expecting them to behave the same way, to seek attention the same way, to seek approval the same way ... and the difference between cats and dogs couldn't be any more wide."



—Jackson Galaxy, the "Cat Daddy," during a live interview for the Humane Voices podcast at Animal Care Expo in April. Find this episode at humanesociety.org/humane-voices or wherever you get your podcasts.

✦ Letters from our readers



Many thanks to Nancy Lawson for her illuminating article "Should we let nature feed the birds?" (Spring '23). I'm considering moving to a condo community where the backyards tend to be blank slates. Her piece got me excited about filling my little patch of earth with native trees, shrubs and flowering plants that will support not only birds but all wild creatures while adding to the health of the natural environment on the other side of the fence.

—DEVON GALE SMITH

I love the story about keeping your distance when viewing wildlife (Spring '23). I agree that visitors should respect wildlife and I love that the editor gave people like me great advice. Some people also want a bear, wolf, etc., for pets, but wild animals aren't pets—they belong in the wild. —ELISE FARNIOK

EDITORS' NOTE: We wholeheartedly agree, Elise. Thanks for reminding everyone that caring about wild animals means appreciating them from a distance—not making them into pets.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that we are unable to publish all submissions.



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HSUS state directors in key states across the country engage citizens and policy-makers in animal protection issues. Learn more at humanesociety.org/statecontacts.

CORRECTION Portions of "Fighting for their lives" (Spring '23) inadvertently misrepresented U.S. laws governing cockfighting, which is a crime in every state and a felony in 42 states plus the District of Columbia. The U.S. map accompanying the story should have been titled "Penalties for possession and trafficking of birds for cockfighting." A paragraph in the story should have read: "Although it's illegal, cockfighting is also big business, and its participants aren't shy about flexing their political muscle."



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At left, a cat receives a physical exam after being rescued from a residential property in Mississippi. Some of the cats were found confined to cages (below) with little stimulation or enrichment.



Healing inside and out

The HSUS helps rescue and rehabilitate cats from alleged large-scale neglect situation

TOBY IS UNDERWEIGHT, with scarred ears and a choppy haircut where severe matts have been cut out. Still, he looks healthier than he did when our Animal Rescue Team first saw him, says Katie DeMent as she sits on the floor petting him at our Maryland care and rehabilitation center in February.

On Jan. 31, our Animal Rescue Team joined local law enforcement agencies and the Mississippi Animal Rescue League to remove 176 cats from three residential properties owned by one individual in Crystal Springs, Mississippi. Most of the cats lived in those three homes, but rescuers also found cats in outdoor enclosures and under a deck. "Everywhere we turned, whether it was in the actual house, in a closet, outside, there were cats," says DeMent, senior manager of animal care.

Inside, the homes were filthy and dimly lit, with little natural light. Responders needed headlamps for the darkest rooms. Some animals roamed freely while others were found in small wire crates encrusted in excrement. The cats appeared to have little stimulation or human interaction; DeMent describes it as living in "sensory

deprivation." One cat, a senior male the rescue team later named Simon, was found living alone in a chicken coop-type enclosure. He ran up to rescuers as they opened his enclosure, looking for affection.

"Cats are so sensitive," says Allison Bundock, HSUS senior specialist of animal health, noting the importance of meeting cats' physical and psychological needs. Although some cats—including Simon—were friendly, the majority were fearful, she says. Bundock worked at an outdoor veterinary station. As she received reports from responders about how evasive the cats were, she became "really worried about how realistic it was going to be to place many of them" into new homes.

In addition to behavioral issues, some cats suffered from upper respiratory infections, skin conditions, ear infections and



Good-natured Toby was emaciated and dehydrated when rescuers first found him.

dehydration. Simon had lost all his teeth except one canine, which was later removed. The team brought several cats to an emergency vet right away—including Toby, who was severely emaciated and dehydrated. His fur was so matted with litter and feces it was likely causing pain.

The 176 cats went to confidential locations to receive care. One night, a veterinary technician noticed Simon was having trouble breathing and brought him to an emergency clinic, where veterinarians discovered he had a heart issue. After receiving treatment, Simon went to The Homeward Bound Project of MS. A veterinary technician with the rescue fell in love with Simon and provided him a loving hospice home where he spent his last weeks before passing away in March.

Many of the cats will find new homes through our shelter and rescue partners, such as Nashville Humane Association and Kentucky Humane Society, but 32 cats went to our care center for additional medical and behavioral care.

The team took things slowly while the cats acclimated to the center and gained confidence. Staffers put sheets over their

“Aside from his physical looks, behavior-wise you would have never known [Toby] lived in such horrible conditions.”

—KATIE DEMENT, THE HSUS

kennels to avoid overstimulation, and when they checked on the cats, they often found them hiding in the corners of their cages.

Enrichment items—including food puzzles and frozen treats—helped stimulate and engage the cats. They soon began coming out of their shells. When one large tomcat named Banks arrived, he “did not want anyone in his space, didn’t want anyone looking at him, thinking about him,” says Bundock. Within a few weeks, Banks stood at the front of his kennel squeakily meowing and rolling around as staffers walked by, asking for pets.

Even something as small as a homemade cat toy can make a difference, says Bundock. “[They] realize, ‘OK, I’m safe, I can play, I can be happy.’”

One cat arrived ready to socialize:

“Aside from his physical looks, behavior-wise you would have never known [Toby] lived in such horrible conditions,” says DeMent. After gaining weight, he went to Fredericksburg SPCA in Virginia where he quickly caught the eye of a foster family. If it is a good match, they will make it official by adopting him.

Despite the team’s attentive care, a few cats never warmed up to people. Because they had previously lived outdoors, the team decided a traditional home wouldn’t be a good fit. Instead, these cats would be happier living on a farm where they could receive care from a distance. In April, after getting sterilized, microchipped and ear-tipped, those cats went to Uncle Beez Rescue Farm in New Jersey. Banks and 12 other cats went to Humane Society of Chittenden County in Vermont.

As a self-described “cat person,” Bundock felt especially fulfilled once all 32 cats went to shelter and rescue partners. At one point, she had been unsure of the frightened cats’ prospects. Over a few months, she watched them heal physically and mentally. Now, she sends them off to start their new lives. —Brianna Grant



Korean National Assembly member Insoon Nam (left) and her staff joined Humane Society International rescuers—including Kelly Donlithan—during the dog meat closure in Chungcheong province.

HSI closes 18th dog meat farm in South Korea

SOME 200 DOGS are on their way to loving homes after Humane Society International/Korea closed its 18th dog meat farm in March. After nearly three decades in the business and with HSI’s support, Mr. Yang*—a dog meat farmer in Chungcheong province—will retire his business and transition to growing cabbages and other vegetables. HSI is preparing the dogs for adoption in the United States and Canada.

The most recent farm closure comes as South Korea considers a nationwide ban on the dog meat industry. First lady Kim Keon-hee has spoken out in support of a ban, noting in an interview that “Not consuming dog meat is ultimately an expression of respect for man’s best friend, and it also means respect for life.”

Sangkyung Lee, HSI/Korea’s campaign manager for ending the dog meat trade, is heartened by Mr. Yang’s desire to exit the industry. “Farmers like Mr. Yang are symbols of change in South Korea,” he says.

“A new generation of animal lovers like me don’t wish to see this suffering continue.”

“There’s no future for the dog meat industry,” Mr. Yang told reporters during the closure.

—Kelly L. Williams



87%

of South Koreans have never eaten dog meat or don’t intend to do so

*Mr. Yang asked to be identified by his last name only.



At left, disaster responders carry a stranded mother dog from the rubble. Her puppies are safely stowed in a plastic container. Below, Claudia Edwards (front) of HSI/Mexico and Grettel Delgadillo of HSI/Latin America comfort rescued puppies.



Amid tragedy in Türkiye, the human-animal bond endures

HSI disaster responders help a community devastated by earthquakes

THE DISASTER RESPONDERS could tell when they were getting close to their destination. Driving south to Antakya—a city revered for its cultural history and home to 400,000 people—they saw a few damaged buildings. But as they approached the city, almost every building was crumbling. Once inside Antakya, they had to weave around piles of debris in the road. They saw dogs and cats wandering the streets and countless tents housing residents and emergency responders.

Two weeks earlier, on Feb. 6, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Türkiye and northern Syria. Just hours later, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake hit. Over 57,000 people were killed and millions more were impacted. In Antakya, residents were left with no electricity or safe drinking water as they endured the trauma of aftershocks.

As news of the disaster broke, Humane Society International provided emergency financial assistance to local groups Working Animals Rescue Foundation and Homeless Animals Protection Society, enabling them to dispatch veterinarians and transport supplies to affected areas. HSI disaster responders also deployed to Türkiye, where they searched for missing pets and injured animals and helped run one of the three

clinics set up by local veterinarians—many of whom had faced unimaginable losses.

Veterinarian Savaş Akdeniz was trapped in his home with his girlfriend and two friends for 33 hours before being rescued. One of his friends died. After traveling to a nearby city to bury her, he and a few loved ones returned to help, setting up the clinics alongside others in the veterinary community. During the first few days, “conditions were really rough,” Akdeniz says.

A veterinarian and veterinary technician worked nonstop at the first clinic and were exhausted when HSI/Mexico campaign director and veterinarian Claudia Edwards arrived to help. Additional responders from HSI also eased the workload, caring for animals rescued by our team or brought in by residents. Cuts, infected wounds, dehydration and starvation

“You’re just faced with so much devastation and loss. What I found to be so incredible was the dedication of the people to their animals.”

—KELLY DONITHAN, HSI

“Working here and helping animals greatly helped me and my colleagues’ mental health. Thanks to this work, I feel I have a purpose.”

—SAVAŞ AKDENİZ, VETERINARIAN

were among the most common issues.

In the field, responders set up pet food and water stations and searched for lost pets. They investigated desperate barks and meows coming from collapsed buildings and responded to reports of animals stranded in crumbling buildings, on rooftops and on balconies.

Rescue efforts proved difficult: Many animals hid in rubble-strewn locations too dangerous for responders to enter, and aftershocks—including a 6.4 magnitude earthquake on the team’s second day—scared animals farther out of reach. Responders often had to visit a location multiple times before successfully rescuing an animal. But they kept returning, and every day they reunited people with their pets.

One family spent nearly all their waking hours looking for their cat, Jugo, after their home was damaged. For more than two weeks, responders tried to rescue Jugo.

During their first attempt, he slinked off into a nearly collapsed building. The team left a humane cat trap and returned day after day, but aftershocks kept Jugo at a distance.

When Edwards left Antakya, Jugo was still running loose. Subsequent teams from HSI continued to help the family search for their cat. Edwards went home to Mexico but could not stop thinking about Jugo. About a week later, the family called her: They had used a hair tie they found in the rubble to entice Jugo to play and grabbed him when he came close. Edwards was elated and continues to stay in contact with the family, receiving pictures of Jugo playing and taking naps.

Another pet owner, Rumeysa, was woken by her cat, Leyla, just before the first earthquake hit. Rumeysa fled her building before it collapsed by jumping out a window but was separated from Leyla during the chaos. Rumeysa had injured her leg and was transferred to Istanbul for treatment but posted a plea on Facebook: Could anyone help her find Leyla?

After seeing Rumeysa’s request, HSI responders made multiple visits to her home but could not find Leyla. Kelly Donithan, director of animal disaster response for the rescue team, asked Rumeysa to record audio of herself calling



HSI’s Kelly Donithan helps facilitate a reunion between Rumeysa and her cat, Leyla.

Leyla’s name. The trick worked, and Leyla came out to investigate. HSI cared for her at the clinic while Rumeysa traveled to Antakya, leg in a cast, to reunite with Leyla.

Stories like Rumeysa’s helped keep morale up. “Working here and helping animals greatly helped me and my colleagues’ mental health. Thanks to this work, I feel I have a purpose,” says Akdeniz. Donithan agrees. “You’re just faced with so much devastation and loss,” she says. “What I found to be so incredible was the dedication of the people to their animals.”

Donithan saw this dedication in the street dogs who came into her tent at night to cuddle, accustomed to affection after years receiving care from locals. Veterinarians and rescuers have helped over 1,500 animals at the clinics, with HSI funding vehicles, kennels and advanced equipment so they can operate long-term. And the commitment to animals extends beyond city limits: Around 2,000 Turkish residents volunteered to adopt rescued animals without owners.

Our team knew they could not undo the tragedy people had faced, but they could provide a sense of home and comfort by reuniting people with their pets. While messaging with Donithan, Rumeysa—who had worked as a nurse at a nearby hospital and lost friends and colleagues during the earthquakes—said, “My everything is gone. I don’t have any socks. There is only Leyla.”

—Brianna Grant



Disaster responders help local veterinarians run a field clinic for injured and rescued animals.



Putting an end to the fading U.S. mink industry

A FEDERAL BILL COULD SHUT FARMS, REDUCE RISK OF DISEASE

WHEN WYOMING RESCUER MEGAN CARFINO encountered a farmed mink for the first time—she volunteered to transport him from South Dakota to Montana—the animal seemed to her like a mythical creature. He was bigger and lighter colored than the brown-coated American minks she had seen in the wild. For a century and a half, farmed mink have been bred for their pelts, marketed in shades such as mahogany, blue iris, sapphire and pearl. Jaques—who had escaped from a farm in Ontario, Canada, and was on his way to a West Coast sanctuary—was tan, or “fawn.” What struck Carfino most was his expression.

“He had an amazingly intelligent face,” says Carfino, who cared for the farmed mink for a day or two at her rescue in Sheridan and then took him on the next leg of his journey. “He was magical.”

In the wild, mink are solitary and territorial. They spend their time swimming, fishing, digging and exploring. On fur farms in the U.S. and elsewhere, they are confined to rows of small wire cages, often several to a cage, from soon after birth until they are gassed at age 9 months.

The conditions thwart their instincts, says professor Alastair MacMillan, veterinary adviser for Humane Society International. “You couldn’t think of anything further from their natural environment.”

The value of U.S. mink production declined by more than half, from **\$122,742,888** in 2017 to **\$59,933,885** in 2021.

On mink farms, the only water flows from automated systems that fill drinking bowls in cages. Two times a day, a machine called a Minkomatic drives up and down the rows to deliver a slurry of meat and food production byproducts through the cage tops. Bored, anxious and frustrated, the mink pace and sway their bodies and their heads. They fight. They dig at and chew on the wire until their noses tear open and their teeth and nails break. They pick and groom their skin until it bleeds.

Nearly 20 countries have already banned the farming of mink, responding to the cruelty of raising these wild animals in captivity and the risk farms with thousands of stressed, crowded mink pose to public health. The Humane Society of the United States hopes to see a bill introduced soon in Congress that would ban the farming of mink for fur in the U.S. Mink are particularly susceptible to COVID-19, which humans have passed to farmed mink and which farmed mink have passed back to humans and to other mink, including those in the wild. They are also susceptible to avian flu, which this year sickened mink fed poultry on a farm in Spain and then spread from mink to mink.

A potential bill could offer mink farmers money to compensate them for the cost of closing their businesses and the market value of buildings and equipment, helping them transition either to another source of income or retirement, says Haley Stewart, HSUS program manager for wildlife protection public policy. “It would allow them out of a dying industry.”

As demand for fur has fallen, mink farming has shrunk in the U.S. The number of mink pelts produced in the country fell by three-quarters during the last 50 years—from 5.7 million in 1969 to 1.44 million in 2021, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics. The number of mink farms in Wisconsin, Utah, Idaho and Oregon (the first, second, third and fourth top producers) and 18 other states dropped by more than 90%—from 2,800 in 1969, according to the USDA, to less than 250 and perhaps as low as 120.

A dwindling but still sizeable number

STATES RANKED BY NUMBER
OF MINK PELTS PRODUCED

(2022 report, 2020 numbers):



Wisconsin: 423,140

Utah: 386,880

Idaho: 170,000

Oregon: 137,790

Iowa: 61,000

Minnesota: 42,230

Michigan: 20,360

Pennsylvania: 18,490

Illinois and Washington did not report their numbers because they said that would reveal information about individual farms. States not listed produced 181,870 pelts combined.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

of mink farms still exist in Europe, the world's largest producer, and China, the world's second largest producer. The industry in Europe has shrunk from 41 million pelts in 2014 to 9 million pelts in 2021 (versus 6.9 million in China). But Denmark, which in 2020 culled 17 million mink on its farms to prevent the spread of new strains of COVID, is importing mink to resume breeding.

Whether in the U.S., Europe or China, farmed mink are descendants of a small number of American mink (Neovison vison). Although escaped mink can survive in the wild—and have pushed the native European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) toward extinction—they carry genetic defects

from years of inbreeding, including blindness, heart problems, cancers, arthritis, jaw issues and bad teeth, according to Carfino.

When Carfino takes in new mink, she first provides medical treatment for these genetic issues and wounds from life in a cage. Equally important, she offers mental and physical stimulation. She gives them water to swim in, tunnels to burrow through and toys and puzzles to play with.

If fur farming is banned in the U.S., mink on farms will be euthanized. That means Carfino won't be getting any more of the animals she loves at her rescue. That's OK, she says. "We need to put an end to this because it's incredibly inhumane. They suffer every single day of their short lives."

—Karen E. Lange

→ **TAKE ACTION:** To learn when a bill is introduced in Congress and how to support it, follow HSUS CEO and president Kitty Block's blog at blog.humanesociety.org.



"When a high-profile public figure chooses to adopt, it makes a huge impact because it changes the entire conversation around adoption—making it trendy, highlighting the amazing pets in our shelters and reaching a wider audience."

—HSUS Maryland state director Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, who assisted Maryland Gov. Wes Moore in finding and adopting a mixed-breed pup from the Maryland SPCA, an HSUS shelter and rescue partner. Moore welcomed his new family member—named Tucker Balti Moore—in February.



Keep grizzly bears protected

After receiving petitions from three Western states aiming to reinstate trophy hunts on grizzly bears, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering removing Endangered Species Act protections for grizzlies living in the Northern Continental Divide and the Greater Yellowstone ecosystems—the two largest populations in the continental U.S. "If the petitions to remove grizzly bear protections are successful, states would undoubtedly rush to hold grizzly bear trophy hunts," says Brianna DelDuca, Humane Society Legislative Fund federal regulatory affairs specialist. "These hunts are not only archaic and innately cruel but would push a vulnerable population of less than 2,000 individuals in the contiguous U.S. to the brink of extinction." —Brianna Grant

→ **TAKE ACTION:** Visit humanesociety.org/grizzlybears to urge the USFWS to keep grizzly bears federally protected in all of their range.



No fun, just fear

Fireworks can scare animals during summer celebrations—and in some states, all year long

A BRIGHT, LOUD FIREWORKS display flashing across the night sky is often considered a fun hallmark of seasonal pastimes like baseball games and barbecues. Yet these blasts of sound and flashing color can easily frighten and even harm animals—and not just our pets. Humans jump at unexpected loud noises too, so it's easy to understand why animals can have fearful reactions to the deafening noise that occurs on such holidays as the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve.

"There is a certain nostalgia—we, in the United States especially, have held onto this idea of big, booming fireworks as part of a celebration of what our country is," says Preston Moore, Iowa state director for the Humane Society of the United States. "But think about the impact past your own yard."

In residential areas, all nearby pets can be affected by one person's fun. Animal shelters may see an influx of lost dogs who bolt, and some animals might become the victims—or even causes—of car accidents.

While fear of loud noises such as thunder or fireworks can be mitigated from inside the home by creating a safe space or playing music to soften the sounds, animals who live outdoors have no escape—but that doesn't stop them from trying.

"I've seen my horses take off at a gallop around their field, watching them with my heart in my throat worried they would crash through a fence or trip and break a leg. It is horrifying every Fourth of July," says Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, HSUS Maryland state director.

Studies also show that fireworks can have a devastating impact on wildlife. They can disrupt migration patterns in some bird species, and individuals who collide with the explosives mid-air—and survive—have been found badly burned. Wildlife rehabilitators may also take in more orphaned wildlife, such as young birds and squirrels whose parents flee. Fireworks also pollute soil,

water and air, and they can harm humans: Their components have caused cardiovascular and respiratory damage, even death.

Some states are pushing back. When Iowa legalized consumer-grade fireworks in 2017, Cedar Rapids residents noticed an immediate uptick in disruptive backyard displays, says Moore, noting that they can be tough for veterans experiencing PTSD. That same year, public outcry from animal lovers led the city to decide fireworks wouldn't be allowed within city limits.

Pennsylvania legalized consumer fireworks in 2017. Since then, fireworks have caused barn fires, vehicle collisions with spooked horses and a fireworks-related fire that killed a child in the summer of 2021.

In response, residents have formed groups such as Stop Philly Fireworks, a grassroots task force supporting legislation that would institute reasonable controls that include prohibiting fireworks during certain times and increasing penalties for violations. It's also a top priority for the Municipal League, where coalition partners—including the HSUS—have "worked together to really focus on how we're going to move this legislation forward," according to Kristen Tullo, Pennsylvania state director.

The state had a policy win in 2022 with the Modified Fireworks Law, which requires users to provide written notice to animal housing facilities within 72 hours of discharging fireworks within 150-300 feet of their property. The law also gives more power to municipalities to regulate consumer fireworks, allowing governments to set time restrictions

and usage prohibitions.

A more humane and healthy solution may be found in technology like "quiet" fireworks, laser shows and drone displays, which create a spectacle without the noise.

"I think there's an appetite for that in a lot of communities," says Moore. "It's almost a gateway issue to think about how your choices are impacting the world and other living things." —Danielle S. Tepper



Learn more

Visit humanesociety.org/fireworks for simple ways to keep both pets and wildlife safe during festivities.

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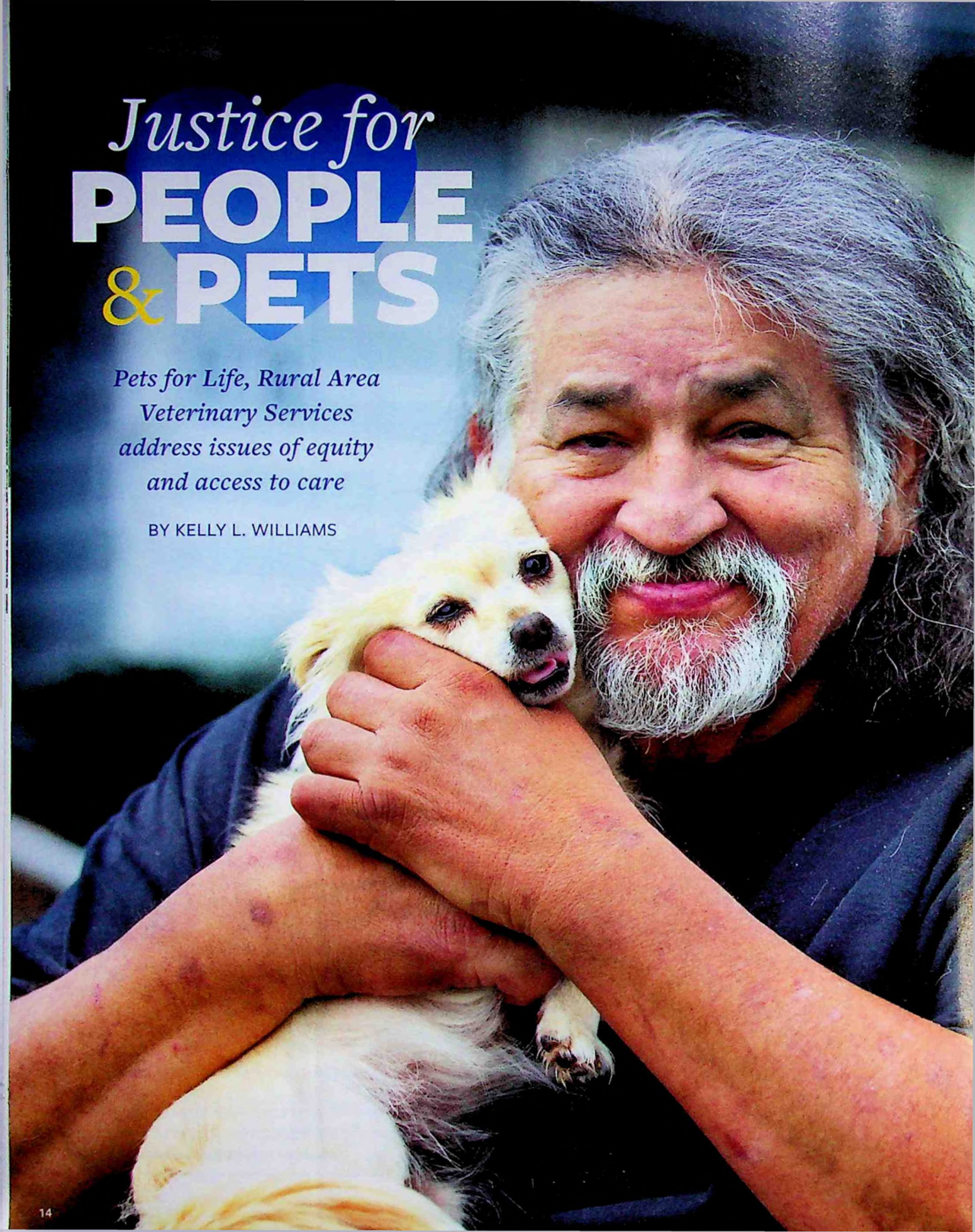
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Justice for **PEOPLE** & **PETS**

*Pets for Life, Rural Area
Veterinary Services
address issues of equity
and access to care*

BY KELLY L. WILLIAMS



IN ONE SENSE, it was a “routine” grooming appointment. In November, a big poodle mix named Freeda got her curly black hair shampooed, cut and blow-dried to perfection. She went in looking good and came out looking better, ready to show off her new ‘do to mom Janis at their Northern Idaho home. (Janis prefers to be identified by her first name only.)

In another sense, it was a momentous event. A few days later, a van rolled up to Janis’ home and Kendra Dodge from the Better Together Animal Alliance stepped out, hands full of balloons. The snow crunched underfoot as Dodge and Janis offered squeaky toys to Freeda, showering her with praise.

It was just another day for Freeda, who’s accustomed to being the center of attention. But for the Better Together Animal Alliance and the Humane Society of the United States, it represented a milestone: Freeda’s grooming was the 1 millionth service provided under the Pets for Life umbrella.

BRIDGING THE RESOURCE GAP

It might seem like a small thing, giving a dog a bath and a haircut. But grooming is crucial, says Amanda Arrington, HSUS vice president of access to care, not a “luxury.” It keeps dogs like Freeda from getting painful, matted hair. Arrington says she’s seen too many instances where an ungroomed dog leads to citations or criminal charges for “lack of care.” Yet the service can be pricey, and groomers often require proof of vaccination, a struggle for people who can’t access veterinary care.

When you multiply that one grooming service times a million, you get a million small acts that add up to something big: a radical reframing of the way we care for pets and their families. The HSUS Pets for Life program has helped lead that reframing as it makes pet care more attainable.

Today, some 20 million U.S. pets live in poverty with their families—and 70% of those pets have never seen a veterinarian. It’s not for lack of desire. It’s for lack of

access: 28% of *all* pet owners report an inability to access veterinary care.

Since 2011, Pets for Life has bridged the gap between pet care and the animals who need it. The program provides medical care, spay/neuter services, grooming, training, supplies and more at no cost to people and pets in underserved communities. Pets for Life has flagship locations in Los Angeles and Philadelphia, but even more work happens at 50-plus mentorship partners nationwide—including the Better

Together Animal Alliance in Ponderay, Idaho, where Janis is a client. Last year, the group provided palliative care for Baby, Janis’ senior chihuahua, who passed away from an inoperable tumor.

“Losing Baby makes Freeda an even more essential part of Janis’ life,” says Arrington.

Building on the Pets for Life philosophy, mentorship partners work within their communities to build trusting relationships with clients and connect them with resources. The bedrock of that philosophy? That love for animals crosses all boundaries, says Arrington. “That regardless of someone’s income, regardless of someone’s background or what zip code they live in, that animals are an important part of people’s lives.” And the corollary? People deserve to stay with their pets—and pets



Longtime Pets for Life client Janis celebrates the program’s millionth service: a grooming for her dog, Freeda.

with their people.

The same principle has informed the HSUS Rural Area Veterinary Services program since 2002. With a focus on Native communities, RAVS brings veterinary care to tribal lands with significant rates of poverty and unemployment—particularly rural ones. “They might be 50 or 100 miles away from the nearest veterinary practice,” says Windi Wojdak, senior director of RAVS. “So even if economic issues were on balance, the geography then adds another layer of transportation barriers.”

What sets RAVS apart is its teaching component. Each MASH-style spay/neuter clinic is staffed by volunteer veterinarians, veterinary technicians and veterinary students. The goal for students is twofold: to provide both hands-on training and experience with access-to-care issues.


20+
MILLION PETS
live in poverty
with their families
in the U.S.

A Rural Area Veterinary Services client checks in at a clinic serving the Quinault Nation in Taholah, Washington, in April.

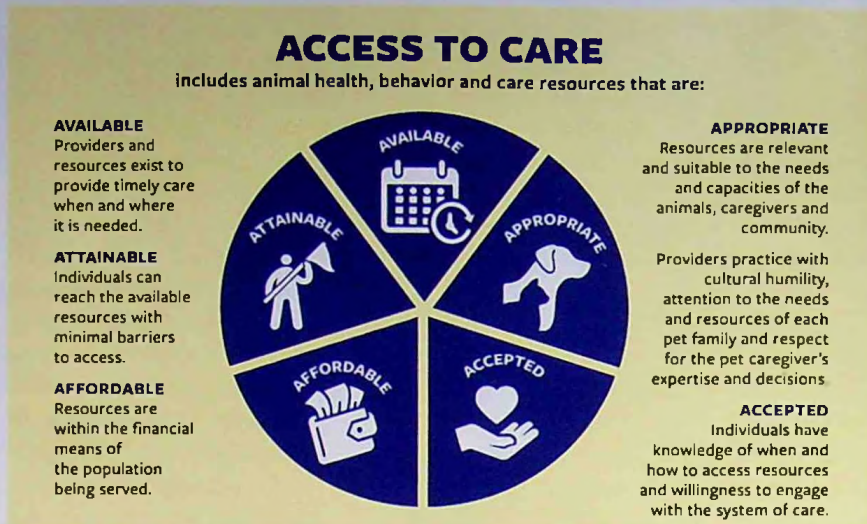


It's one thing to hear statistics, says Wojdak. It's another to see barriers to care firsthand. "I don't know how many times I have had students have true-life lightbulb moments," she says. "That direct experience is absolutely life-altering." Students often leave newly inspired to volunteer or work with under-resourced communities.

HELPING PETS, HELPING PEOPLE

When we offer access to pet resources, says Arrington, "it's not just an animal service, it is a human service." The bonds between people and animals go deep, with proven benefits for human health: reducing cortisol (a stress hormone), lowering blood pressure, reducing feelings of loneliness and so much more—as anyone who has loved an animal knows. Helping people maintain those bonds by keeping them with their pets is a profound service.

But the issues Pets for Life and RAVS address don't occur in a vacuum. Access to veterinary care, access to pet resources, a lack of pet-inclusive housing, "all of that is connected to larger systems of inequity," says Arrington. "And because pets are part of families, it's going to impact animals as well." If a family struggles to purchase cat litter because they don't have a car and public transportation is scarce, they're not only struggling to care for their cat—they're struggling with broader transportation and access issues.



It's easy to oversimplify the problem, to suggest that "if we just have enough spay/neuter programs, the world will be OK," says Wojdak. But asking *why* some communities don't have veterinary clinics and *why* some communities have lower rates of altered pets can lead to some hard truths. Maybe those communities have historically been subject to racist redlining policies, leading to fewer investments in housing and resources. Maybe those communities have been left out of the animal welfare conversation, and they're making the best decisions they can with the information (and resources) they have.

That nuance can get lost in discussions about access to care, especially within the

animal welfare community, where emotions often run high. All too often, we forget that not everyone has the same background when it comes to animal care.

"There's this assumption that everybody is operating from the same sheet of music," says Tai Conley, HSUS senior principal strategist of diversity, equity and inclusion programs. It comes from a good place; we all love animals and want them to thrive. But what if pet care looks different across communities, and what if providing support ensures that a family can enjoy the companionship of an animal in the way that makes sense for them?

Animal welfare organizations' actions tend to reflect a specific set of beliefs: that all pets must be adopted, immediately sterilized and cared for in a very specific way using very specific approaches. That attitude is often echoed on social media and elsewhere: *If you can't afford a pet, you shouldn't have one.* Pets for Life and RAVS challenge that assumption, asking us to broaden our understanding. Is it better to remove a pet from a home because her guardian can't afford kibble at the end of the month? Or is it better—for both pet and human—to connect her guardian with a pet food pantry, preserving their bond?

Taken to its logical conclusion, the argument about affordability suggests that only people with a certain socioeconomic status or living arrangement are worthy of having a pet, says Conley. And that "only exacerbates a problem versus creating



Kaotly the cat receives a medical examination from veterinarian Colleen Cassidy, left, and veterinary assistant Sara Michelassi during the RAVS clinic serving the Quinault Nation in Taholah, Washington.

solutions.” If you’ve ever tried to adopt a pet but been denied because you live in an apartment, or don’t have a fenced yard, or are “too old”—those are all access issues.

“Are we saying that euthanization is a better option than a loving home that just doesn’t have as much financial resource?” asks Conley. “Are we saying that these animals would rather be in unfamiliar environments like a shelter than with the families they’re familiar with?” And if the answer is no, what does it take to keep pets with the families who love them—and to offer the resources those families need?

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

A story about a dog went viral this winter: A fluffy Great Pyrenees-German shepherd mix named Lilo was found wandering in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a handwritten note attached to her collar. “Please love me,” the note read. “My mom can’t keep me and is homeless with two kids. She tried her best but can’t get help. I cost too much for her. She really loves me and I’m a great dog and love to be loved on. Please don’t abuse me.”

A Good Samaritan brought Lilo to McKamey Animal Center, where staff saw Lilo for who she is: a beloved family member whose guardian was trying to keep her safe by making a painful decision. Rather than adopt Lilo into another family, the shelter—which runs a Pets for Life program—facilitated an emotional reunion with her owner. (Staff are helping the family find affordable, pet-inclusive housing.)

It’s worth asking how access-to-care issues affected Lilo and her family, and what a more equitable system might look like. What if we made free pet food and supplies available? What if we offered temporary foster arrangements to people experiencing homelessness?

When we talk about access to care, affordability tends to dominate the conversation. Beth Aulwes, HSUS director of business partnerships, notes that many people facing poverty prioritize care for their pets. Pets for Life staff see it happen time and time again. “And that’s a conundrum we just don’t feel like anyone should have to face,” says Aulwes. Yet affordabil-

Robert Sotelo visits with Pets for Life client Karina Lopez during a community outreach event.



DOING THE WORK

Robert Sotelo, program manager of Pets for Life/Los Angeles

UNEXPECTED BEGINNINGS Robert Sotelo never intended to apply for a job with Pets for Life. In early 2012, the Los Angeles-based dog trainer and his wife, Julie, had recently welcomed their first child. Sotelo was working with local group Bark Avenue Foundation and was close with founder Melanie Pozez. “She took it upon herself to fill out my application,” saying he needed more stability now that he was a dad, he recalls. Pets for Life was new and needed a dog trainer and community organizer. A three-hour conversational interview with Amanda Arrington, then the program’s director, led to a field interview. “I went out and did some door-to-door outreach, and it was pouring rain and we were soaked,” says Sotelo. But it didn’t matter. “That’s where I’m from,” he adds. “It was easy for me to talk to everybody.” He got the job.

“That’s where I’m from. It was easy for me to talk to everybody.”

HIS LIFE’S WORK A Rottweiler mix named Zebby inspired Sotelo’s career. “As a kid, I had pictures and posters of dogs all over my walls, I had books on dogs, I loved dogs!” he says. But Zebby was his first pup as an adult, and she needed training. Sotelo got certified and for a time taught training skills to at-risk youth. At Pets for Life, he offered free assistance to clients in East L.A. Today, Sotelo is the L.A. program manager. (He still makes time for dog training and door-to-door outreach, though.) Sotelo can see the difference the program has made. There are no more packs of dogs running around, and the community is on board with spay/neuter and walking pets on leashes. “It’s just amazing to watch the program grow and develop,” he says.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE The walls of Sotelo’s home are decorated with portraits: endearing renderings of his “pack,” the five dogs he’s loved and lost over the past two decades. Zebby, Kobe, Kenny, Foxy, Spanky ... each had a story, and each found a special place in Sotelo’s heart. Kenny and Kobe passed away last year, followed by a cat, Blanca. Now Sotelo has one cat—Silly—and two turtles. Sotelo’s daughter, 11-year-old Mia, wants a dog, but he’s waiting until the time feels right. Until then, the family enjoys visiting national parks when Julie, a teacher, is on vacation. And in his free time, Sotelo entertains crowds: He’s the lead guitarist in reggae band Arise Roots.



Brandi Markishtum holds pup Lola for a veterinary exam by veterinarian Colleen Cassidy, right, and veterinary assistant Sara Michelassi during the RAVS clinic serving the Quinault Nation.

ity is only part of the story.

"The first thing that folks tend to think is that it's all about economics, right? And that if it's just affordable, if it's free care, then it's accessible," says Wojdak. In reality, "access" is more complex. Building on principles used in human social services, the HSUS defines "access" as providing resources that are available, attainable, affordable, appropriate and accepted.

That nuance is critical, and it reflects the approaches taken by Pets for Life and RAVS. "Equity is about meeting people where they are to produce equal outcomes," says Conley. It's tailoring the approach to the community and avoiding judgment or preconceptions. It's why the HSUS fights for access on multiple fronts, with policy experts advocating for pet-inclusive affordable housing and supporting the expansion of veterinary telemedicine.

We all come to the proverbial table with unique backgrounds and even willingness to engage with the animal welfare movement, says Conley. "Equity is the act of getting more people involved," she says. "It's the conscious practice of making this [movement] more accessible."

THE FUTURE OF PET EQUITY

Conversations about economic, racial and social justice can be tough. Solutions are multifaceted, requiring creative, systems-level thinking. But that shouldn't scare us off—and we shouldn't believe that caring about these issues will detract

from our work for animals, says Arrington.

In fact, "it is mission critical for us to do so," she says. Giving people a solid foundation and emotional space to care for their pets is a powerful way to help animals and keep them in loving homes.

This year, the HSUS is expanding the conversation

about pet equity with the More Than a Pet campaign, which launched in May. To honor the love people have for their four-legged family members, says Aulwes, the campaign showcases how the bond transcends race, ethnicity, geography and socioeconomic status while highlighting how an animal is indeed more than a pet. Its goal is to ensure programs such as Pets for Life and RAVS can continue doing what they've always done: nourishing the human-animal bond by ensuring people have what they need to care for their pets.

Both Wojdak and Arrington are hopeful

about where this conversation can take us, not just as animal welfare advocates, but as people who care about other humans, too.

Arrington acknowledges that it's easy to get impatient. "When you're in the middle of it, it can seem slow," she says, but stepping back offers perspective.

There's been progress in the tenor of the conversation around these issues. Just a decade ago, says Arrington, almost everyone bought into the belief that if you can't afford a pet, you shouldn't have one. Pets for Life, with its nonjudgmental approach of simply meeting people where they are, was quietly radical.

"There wasn't just a disagreement on the philosophy that Pets for Life was promoting. There was real pushback," says Arrington. Naysayers suggested that Pets for Life would "enable" people who "shouldn't" have pets, or that community outreach wasn't safe, or that underserved communities were rampant with animal cruelty and fighting. These days, as conversations about equity have become louder, the naysayers have gotten quieter.

Change has been "so incremental that it's easy to not see the progress," adds Wojdak. But when she reflects on her 20 years doing this work, Wojdak does see it. Then, students joined RAVS primarily for the hands-on clinical experience. As for topics such as shelter medicine and access to care, "none of that was part of the conversation at all," she says. Today, students learn about these issues in school.

Wojdak also sees progress in the types of issues RAVS addresses. She notices fewer preventable illnesses, such as canine parvovirus and sarcoptic mange, and she



4.9M
POUNDS OF FOOD
were distributed
through Pets for Life
and RAVS in 2022



Not just cats and dogs: A pet rabbit receives a veterinary exam during the Quinault Nation RAVS clinic.

Is your companion animal more than a pet?

Tell us what your pet means to you by emailing us at allanimals@humanesociety.org, and we might share your answer. Photos welcome!

says more animals are receiving vaccinations and preventive care.

The change is worth celebrating. "When you look at how long animal shelters have been around and how long the humane movement has existed, for this part of the work to catch on as quickly as it has, I think it's something that all of us collectively should give ourselves some credit for," says Arrington.

A few factors have elevated this conversation, says Arrington. First, there's the work that Pets for Life and RAVS, with partners around the country, have put in. By repeating our message, showing up day after day, year after year, we've proven that this approach can succeed.

Then came 2020. The pandemic revealed widespread economic insecurity, and many people realized that poverty was just a missed paycheck away. Add in a racial reckoning on the part of white Americans beginning to acknowledge the systemic injustice Black Americans have faced for centuries, and it's a "perfect storm," says Arrington. The conversation has since expanded, with the unique needs of historically marginalized communities receiving much-deserved attention.

If the fight for pet equity sounds big, it is. If it sounds hard, it is. But, says Arrington, we're already doing the work. Now we have to name it and expand it.

Meaningful change won't happen overnight. "What does this look like 20 years from now? These aren't three-year goals right? This is the course of my entire career," says Wojdak.

Real change requires groundwork, and organizing, and advocacy. It requires reaching hearts and minds. It's what we've been doing, and what we will continue to do—all of us together, creating a more equitable world for people and their pets.

→ **LEARN MORE:** Support More Than a Pet at humanesociety.org/morethanapet.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Creating an equitable world for people and pets requires more than just providing services. It involves reimagining our societies and supporting humans so they have what they need to provide safe, loving, comfortable homes for themselves and the animals in their care. Here's how you can help.



ADVOCATE FOR PET- AND PEOPLE-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Speak out against breed-specific legislation (the practice of barring people from housing if they have certain breeds of pets) and push for pet-inclusive housing policies. Let your legislators know you support affordable housing and other policies that increase equity. If you're intimidated, remember that many community leaders have pets of their own—and connecting with them about a shared love of animals is a great way to start a conversation.



GET COMFORTABLE WITH DISCOMFORT.

If you feel resistant to these ideas or are unsure how to talk about them, you're not alone. Acknowledge the discomfort and let yourself sit with it. Have conversations that challenge you, and give yourself and others grace. "There are going to be moments where we say the wrong thing, we do the wrong thing, and I think as long as we are giving it our best effort and it's genuine and authentic, we need to support each other through it," says Amanda Arrington, HSUS vice president of access to care.



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHELTER OR RESCUE.

It's a tough time for animal welfare, as the economic and societal issues affecting people ultimately affect their pets. Ask what local groups need: Is it funding? Donations of supplies? More foster families? The better resourced your local shelters and rescues are, the more they'll be able to focus on the big work: supporting pet-friendly policies, providing pet food banks, working in their communities and building relationships to find out what pet owners need.





BRINGING *nostalgia*

TO THE PLANT-BASED TABLE

Two generations of vegans share nostalgic recipes that anyone can make and everyone will eat

“I used to make a really killer cheese ball,” says Carolynne Kreutzer, a retired loan officer and mom of three. But after the consummate host developed lactose intolerance in the early 2000s, she decided to go vegan with encouragement from her kids, including daughter Karin Kreutzer, now senior art director for the Humane Society of the United States. Then she got to work veganizing longtime favorites—including the classic cheese ball.

Thankfully for today’s vegans and veg-curious, the days of suffering through jelly-like “cheese” and tasteless “burger” patties are long gone (remember the ’80s?). “The landscape of vegan food has absolutely exploded, which is so exciting and so fun,” says Alicia Bell, HSUS culinary program manager. The plethora of plant-based substitutes means there’s no reason for vegans to miss out on one of life’s greatest pleasures: making, eating and sharing purely-for-fun foods.

“You just use vegan cheese instead of regular cheese—and I have to tell you, my cheese ball has become famous,” says Carolynne. “Everybody loves it!”

Although the health benefits of eating unprocessed plants are undeniable—and the Kreutzers regularly enjoy salads and other whole vegetables—cauliflower steaks, carrot hot dogs and black bean burgers (though delicious) probably won’t put people in a party mood and may reinforce stereotypes about vegans living

a monastic existence. Plus, substitutes are likely better for you than you think—Bell notes that they’re often lower in saturated fat and higher in fiber than animal products.

“When we first make any change to our diet, it can be a struggle,” says Bell. “Food is so emotional; it’s so tied to memories, to satiety, all of that. We need to keep the foods familiar, just simply swapping out ingredients and knowing that you’re still satisfied, but you’re helping save animals and the planet at the same time.”

Carolynne recalls a family vacation to Yellowstone National Park a decade ago: “We were kind of assured we could get vegan food there,” she says with a laugh. “Oh, you can get vegan food there, all right—black bean burgers. For the whole week that we were there, every night, black bean burgers.” Needless to say, the experience didn’t help persuade her husband, Bill, to go vegan. (He has since passed but was a lifelong meat and potato lover.)

Carolynne, who lives with Karin, now uses modern substitutes to veganize American classics from chicken and rice casserole to chocolate pie, which she first veganized for her son, who went plant-based just after high school. “She’s always been such a nurturer, always making sure everybody’s fed,” says Karin, recalling her brother’s high school friends eating more often at the Kreutzers’ home than their own. “The second we know somebody’s coming over, her first question is, ‘So, what are we going to make?’ ”

Recipes by: Carolynne and Karin Kreutzer | Story by: Bethany W. Adams | Photos by: Meredith Lee | Food styling and design: Jessica Croce



THE CHEESE BALL

A friend shared the original dairy-based recipe with Carolynne in the '80s, but since veganizing the ball, it remains a fan favorite on holidays. Karin adds that it's best when you grate a block of plant-based cheese rather than using a pre-shredded variety. After the Kreutzers passed the recipe along, friends have discovered new ways to enjoy "the ball." One uses leftovers as a sandwich spread.

For those wary of "fake" animal products, Carolynne refers to a classic ad: "Just try it, you'll like it!"

FRANKIES IN BLANKIES

Invented by the British, pigs in blankets were popularized by cookbook author Delia Smith in the '90s and have been a ubiquitous party snack ever since. Coined by Karin, "frankies in blankies" keep the catchy name but spare the namesake in favor of plant-based frankfurters or sausages.



The cheese ball

Makes one extra-large ball or two medium balls

Ingredients

- 8 oz. shredded vegan pepper jack
- 8 oz. shredded vegan cheddar
- 8 oz. vegan cream cheese, room temperature (Tofutti preferred)
- ½ cup vegan sour cream
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 heaping tablespoon horseradish
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or slivered almonds (optional)

Instructions

1. Place first six ingredients in a large mixing bowl and thoroughly combine.
2. Roll into one large ball (or two small).
3. Spread nuts on a nonstick baking mat or parchment paper and carefully roll the cheese ball until covered.
4. Place the ball in a dish and serve with crackers and veggies.

Frankies in blankies

Ingredients

- 8 oz. tube of vegan crescent rolls (Pillsbury and most standard store brands are vegan)
- 1 package vegan hot dogs, frankfurters or sausages, each cut in half
- Coarse salt (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. On a nonstick mat or lightly floured surface, unroll crescent sheets and tear along the perforation. Slice each in half lengthwise for two smaller triangles. Place one half hot dog on the wider side of the triangle and roll up.
3. Transfer to a baking sheet and sprinkle with a small amount of coarse salt. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes.



Seven-layer dip

Ingredients

- 16 oz. can refried beans (with no lard)
- 16 oz. vegan sour cream
- 1 package taco seasoning
- 1 cup each guacamole, chopped tomatoes and shredded lettuce/spinach
- ½ cup each chopped onions and olives
- Tortilla chips

Instructions

1. Spread refried beans on the bottom of a shallow glass dish.
2. Mix the taco seasoning with the sour cream and spread over the beans.
3. Layer guacamole, tomatoes, lettuce, olives and onions on top.
4. Serve with tortilla chips.

Buffalo chicken sliders

Ingredients

- 3 cups shredded Gardein Ultimate Chick'n Filets or any plant-based chicken
- ½ cup Buffalo sauce
- 12 brioche slider buns or dinner rolls
- 8 oz. shredded vegan mozzarella
- 1 bottle vegan ranch dressing
- 2 tablespoons unsalted vegan butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Prepared coleslaw

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. In a small bowl, combine the chicken and Buffalo sauce.
2. Place the bottom buns in a 9 by 13" baking dish. Layer on the ranch, cheese and chicken and cover with bun tops.
3. Melt butter with garlic and parsley and brush on buns. Bake for 10-12 minutes.
4. Carefully remove the bun tops. Add coleslaw before replacing the tops.
5. Serve warm.

SEVEN-LAYER DIP

Karin says this classic dip would've fit in perfectly at the Kreutzers' card table, where "for as long as I can remember," Carolynne held monthly games of Hearts with Karin on her lap and an abundance of "snacky things" in bowls. Other classic dips are easily veganized in the same way: Just swap out sour cream and mayonnaise for their animal-friendly counterparts.

BUFFALO CHICKEN SLIDERS

At sports parties, these colorful Buffalo "chicken" sliders are convenient to eat with one hand while holding a beer or gesticulating at the field with the other. Chicken is an easy meat to replicate with plants, and we're betting (no pun intended) that game spectators won't notice the difference.

MINI PIZZAS

The Kreutzers were the only family at the campground eating pizza from the grill instead of burgers—but for Karin, mini pizzas are a fond childhood memory and still in the family's meal rotation today. Easily customizable, kids will enjoy making their own at sleepovers and parties—or even while camping.

Mini pizzas

Ingredients

- One package English muffins, flatbread or pita bread
- Sauce of choice (Experiment with tomato sauce, pesto or barbecue sauce, or try Thai peanut or cashew alfredo sauce!)
- 8 oz. shredded vegan mozzarella or Miyoko's liquid mozzarella (recommended)
- Toppings of choice (Try plant-based pepperoni or sausage and veggies such as sun-dried tomatoes, mushrooms, olives, pepper, basil or anything you enjoy!)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Place flatbread, pita or English muffins face up on a baking sheet.
3. Spoon about 3-4 tablespoons sauce on each pizza. Sprinkle or pour on cheese and add toppings of your choice.
4. Bake for two minutes or until the cheese starts to turn golden brown.
5. Remove from the oven and enjoy hot!

Try this!

Karin swapped out tomato for barbecue sauce on her pizza (upper left) and topped it with sliced plant-based chicken tenders and red onions. Carolynne covered hers in BE-Hive vegan pepperoni and added banana peppers (immediate left).



Party toffee

Ingredients

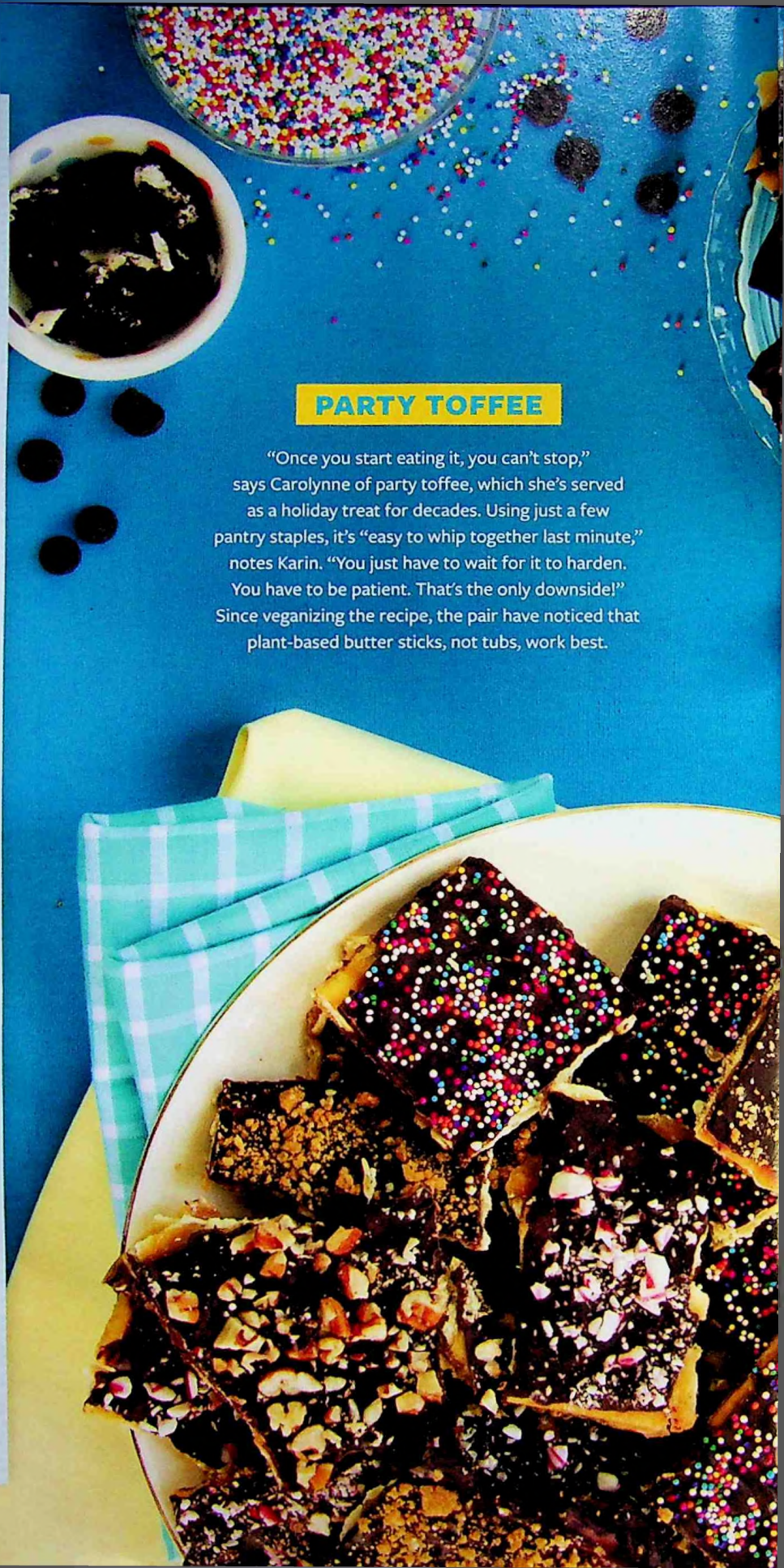
- 40 saltine crackers (a little more than 1 sleeve)
- 1 cup vegan butter sticks (Miyoko's brand preferred)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 cups non-dairy chocolate chips
- Toppings of choice (chopped nuts, crushed mints or candy canes, sprinkles, crushed pretzels)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Line a large baking pan with a nonstick baking mat or parchment paper. Lay the crackers out in rows without overlapping, filling the entire pan.
3. Place butter and brown sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring as it melts. Once it boils, continue to gently stir the mixture for five minutes. Remove from heat and quickly pour over the crackers. Use a spatula to spread the toffee mixture over the crackers. Place the pan in the oven and bake for five minutes.
4. Remove from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Allow to sit for 1-2 minutes to melt, then use a spatula to spread the chocolate evenly. Sprinkle toppings over the melted chocolate while still warm.
5. Place the tray in the refrigerator or freezer for 30 minutes to harden. Once it's set, break it into pieces by hand and store it in an air-tight container in the fridge or freezer.

PARTY TOFFEE

"Once you start eating it, you can't stop," says Carolynne of party toffee, which she's served as a holiday treat for decades. Using just a few pantry staples, it's "easy to whip together last minute," notes Karin. "You just have to wait for it to harden. You have to be patient. That's the only downside!" Since veganizing the recipe, the pair have noticed that plant-based butter sticks, not tubs, work best.





Plant-based made easy

Accidentally vegan treats

An easy way to determine whether something's vegan is to skip to the "allergens" list and look for milk, eggs, fish or shellfish—or simply look for cholesterol in the nutrition panel: Even 1% cholesterol means it isn't vegan. But you might be surprised by the number of ready-made products that are "accidentally vegan!"

- Arnold Bread and Cobblestone Mill baked goods (most products), Thomas' bagels
- BelVita crunchy breakfast biscuits and Nature Valley crunchy granola bars (most flavors)
- Betty Crocker Bac-O's bacon flavor bits
- Late July Sea Salt and Lime chips and Spicy Sweet Chili Doritos
- Most store-bought pastry and dough
- Most original flavor potato chips
- Oreos and unfrosted Pop-Tarts
- Sour Patch Kids (U.S. only), Swedish Fish and Twizzlers
- Most dark chocolate (check for dairy)

Fast food fixes

Convenient, cheap fast food used to be sadly off-limits for veg-heads, but thankfully, many chains have wised up to the demand for plant-based options. Here's a cheat sheet for when you need something quick and tasty.

- **Burger King:** Impossible Whopper (hold the mayo) and fries
- **Chipotle:** Sub meat with beans or plant-based sofritas and replace sour cream with guacamole
- **Dunkin':** English muffin, avocado toast, hash browns and non-dairy milk (almond, coconut and oat)
- **Starbucks:** Impossible sausage, oatmeal, all bagels, non-dairy milk (almond, coconut, oat and soy)
- **Subway:** Ask for Italian white bread and opt for a veggie patty or the Veggie Delite
- **Taco Bell:** Sub meat with black beans, refried beans or potatoes and order any item "fresco style" to replace cheese and sour cream with diced tomatoes



Nutritional yeast

adds savory flavor to sauces and soups. It also makes a great popcorn seasoning—just use in place of cheese powder for a nutrition boost (it's a sodium-free complete protein and contains fiber, antioxidants and B vitamins). Find it online or in the baking aisle of many grocery stores.

The average American vegan spares an estimated 116 animals each year—and reduces their water footprint by 37% over a lifetime.



While some cats are naturally affectionate and outgoing, others take longer to bond with their people—and helping them build confidence can be its own reward.



Perks of adopting a wallflower

With a little bit of patience, shy cats can make loyal and loving companions

MANY OF MY GUESTS don't believe me when I tell them I have two cats. They see Toothless crying for attention and plopping on the ground for belly rubs, while the only signs of a second cat are the two food and water bowls in my kitchen. Boots is long gone under the bed by the time visitors enter my home.

Boots is your stereotypical shy cat. She takes a long time to warm up to people and fears loud noises. She can be affectionate with my husband and me but swats our hands away when she's done receiving pets. Caring for Boots is sometimes difficult—like when I gave her flea medication and she was so upset she hid under the bed for three days. I know she will never be the cat who jumps into my lap for attention, but I also know that having a shy cat like Boots comes with all its own perks.

WORTH THE WAIT

"While it can take time and patience to help a shy cat build trust and confidence in their new environment and with their new owners, watching them blossom is incredibly rewarding," says Amanda Kowalski, vice president of behavior programs at San Diego Humane Society. "The first time they start to interact with you, like giving you a nose touch or rubbing against you, is so gratifying and worth the wait."

I still remember every milestone Boots passed when my husband and I started

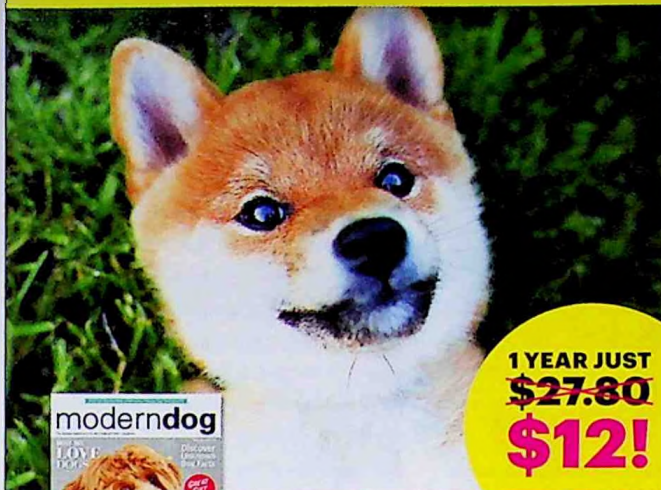
socializing her eight years ago. When I found her eating out of our garbage bin one dreary morning, skeletal and soaking wet from a recent rainstorm, I didn't think I would end up adopting her. I figured I would feed her for a few days to earn her trust before bringing her to a local shelter to get adopted. But as my husband and I started caring for her, and saw how much work went into forming a bond, we knew she would be our cat.

The first time she let us sit within a few feet of her while she ate felt like a major

"While it can take time and patience to help a shy cat build trust and confidence in their new environment and with their new owners, watching them blossom is incredibly rewarding,"

—AMANDA KOWALSKI, SAN DIEGO HUMANE SOCIETY

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breakthrough. Then, a few weeks later, she let us pet her (my husband and I silently cheered so as not to scare her). Even today, years after bringing her into our home, we still get to watch Boots grow. After being enclosed in the bathroom for hours when my husband and I moved last year, Boots remained calm as I pulled her out of her hiding spot and put her into a cat carrier. I could tell that although she had no clue what I was doing, she trusted me.

When I worked at a cat rescue, I gravitated to the many shy cats who crossed our doors, inspired by my experience with Boots. Slowly, over time, they transformed with some patience and one-on-one work. I loved discovering new aspects of their personalities as they came out of their shells. At the same time, it was difficult to watch them struggle to find adoptive homes. I knew these cats could be loving companions, but potential adopters sometimes couldn't see past their timid demeanor and evasive behavior.

When looking at cats in a shelter or rescue, it's important to remember that "what you see is not necessarily what you're gonna get," says Nancy Puro, volunteer and behavior programs manager at Cat Adoption Team, the largest cat shelter in the Pacific

"A lot of times cats in a shelter environment, or even in foster homes, may come across as really shy but when you put them in a different environment, such as a home environment, they can really blossom."

—DANIELLE BAYS, THE HSUS

Northwest. She explains that the behavior a cat is displaying at a shelter or rescue may not reflect what their personality will be like once they settle into a home.

A SPECTRUM OF SHY

The term "shy cat" encompasses a wide array of personalities: Some shy cats—like Boots—did not fully socialize to humans as kittens, while others behave fearfully because they are overwhelmed. "A lot of times cats in a shelter environment, or even in foster homes, may come across as really shy but when you put them in a different environment, such as a home

environment, they can really blossom," says Danielle Bays, HSUS senior analyst of cat protection and policy.

Many of the cats displaying fearful behavior at Cat Adoption Team's shelter in Sherwood, Oregon, are surrendered by owners and were friendly and affectionate in their previous homes. Puro says these cats typically adjust quicker to new homes than cats who are behaving shyly because they have not fully socialized to humans.

Cats with scant social skills can still make great pets, but adopters should be aware that their cat may always be a little reserved. My husband and I learned that Boots seeks us out when she wants attention. She is the most affectionate when we first wake up in the morning, so we make sure to treasure that time with her before she goes off to nap alone in the afternoon.

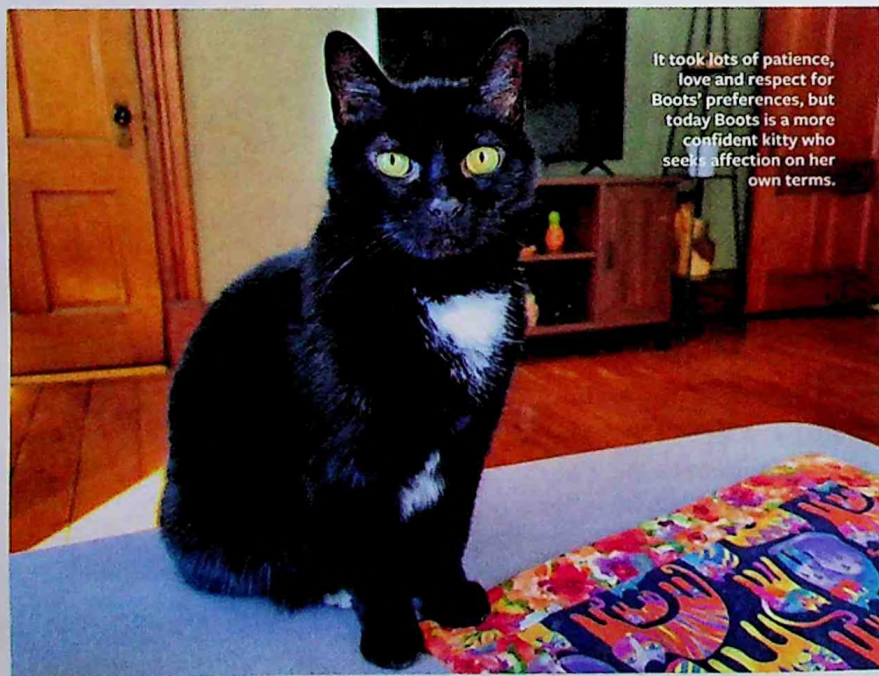
Progress may be slow, especially when you first bring your new companion home, but it's important to go at their pace. "How would you interact with a shy person? Would you run up to them and hug them?" says Bays. "You don't want to force it; you want them to come to you."

Many shelters and rescues also offer resources to help owners. San Diego Humane Society runs an online shy cat training class where, for \$100, attendees learn how to better understand their cat over the course of five weeks; it includes exercises they can do together to help the kitty feel more comfortable. (You can also get tips for reducing stress in cats by reading our Fall '21 story at humanesociety.org/helping-stressed-cats.)

Kowalski says students have shared lots of positive feedback. One woman learned how to interact with her 5-year-old cat who was rescued from a neglectful situation and spent all his time hiding. "It was incredible to know he finally trusted me enough to want to be close," his owner said after he rubbed against her arms and legs for the first time. He now jumps on the couch in the mornings and evenings for pets or just to spend time near her.

For shy cat owners, sometimes the smallest gestures are the biggest rewards.

—Brianna Grant



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Low-maintenance wildlife ponds create habitat for frogs, toads, dragonflies and more—plus, they act as drinking holes for land-based critters.

Wild waters

Naturalistic ponds welcome frogs and other animals

BY SOME HUMAN STANDARDS, my pond is a hot mess. Underneath and around the water lilies are fallen leaves, branches and other debris of decomposing plants. Along the edges, sea oats, sedges and swamp sunflowers hug the rocks.

But if humans are picky in their desire for orderliness, frogs are just as picky in their need for the opposite. By amphibian standards, the watering hole my husband and I carved out of our remaining lawn is an oasis: A still-water pond filled with decay brims with life. Ours is only 10 feet in diameter, but what it lacks in size it makes up for in rich habitat.

In the wild, some natural ponds “smell not the greatest,” says Cy Mott, an associate professor of biology at Eastern Kentucky University. “Amphibians not only don’t care about that, they can

sometimes determine where a pond is and how high-quality it is by the smell. When I go wading into some of my [study] ponds, it’s straight-up methane because you’re releasing the products of decomposition. But it’s great for amphibians.”

That doesn’t mean you have to create a stink in your garden; our pond is inoffensive to human noses. But rejecting conventional pond advice—which emphasizes adding counterproductive products (algaeicides, bacteria, enzymes) and removing natural materials—can go a long way toward creating productive watery sanctuaries.

“I remember when we were at this really posh

plant center in town,” says Theresa Berrie, a naturalist and permaculture gardener in Ridgeway, Wisconsin. “They put in a lot of expensive ponds for people. We asked about whether you can have a pond without a pump, and they said, ‘That won’t work; you can’t put dirt in the bottom.’ They had a whole wall of chemicals.”

Since then, Berrie and her partner have built and nurtured a lush pond without pumps or chemical inputs that draws frogs, birds and dragonflies to their 60-foot-by-140-foot yard. A synthetic rubber liner is topped by soil and rocks that hold roots of native arrowheads. Berrie’s experience inspired her to write the book *How to Build a Backyard Wildlife Pond*, a helpful gem that dismantles prevailing industry myths.

IT’S NOT ABOUT FISH AND FOUNTAINS

Many people assume that ponds go hand in hand with koi, goldfish or mosquitofish. But fish eat tadpoles and frog eggs, along with invertebrates that adult frogs need in their diet. Just as concerning, purveyors of pond products suggest maintaining oxygen levels for introduced fish by removing fallen leaves and killing algae, practices that eliminate food and shelter for amphibians. Pumps can suck in frog eggs, tadpoles and dragonfly nymphs; waterfalls and powerful aerators create turbulence that breeding frogs avoid.

Unobstructed, open waters increase predation risk, so ponds need structural elements. “It’s what we would call habitat heterogeneity,” Mott notes. “You need a lot of twists and turns and hiding places, submerged grasses ... and things like submerged branches. Most of my best breeding ponds are just chock full of downed limbs.”

Animals find uses for decaying plant matter year-round. In spring, wood frogs attach egg masses to fallen stalks. In summer, green frogs chill under pieces of bark. Tadpoles eat



Animals find uses for decaying plant matter in ponds year-round.



Around pond edges, plants create critical moist environments for toads, tree frogs and other amphibians who forage on land.

decomposing leaves, and caddis flies—who filter water by consuming plant and animal debris—fashion leafy cases to protect themselves. At pond bottoms, rocks and fallen leaves offer winter shelter.

Branches and stacked rocks also create exit ramps, which are especially important in preformed plastic shells with vertical sides. If you dig your own pond, you can mimic natural sloping; be sure to dig the deepest part below the frost line where fully aquatic frogs can safely overwinter. (Your local cooperative extension office can help identify your region's frost line.)

PLANTS KEEP THE BALANCE

Leaves release nutrients and feed algae as they break down. Algal blooms—caused by fertilizer runoff, sewage and factory farm waste—lead to oxygen-depleted waterways when algae die and decompose. But a certain amount of algae is essential. Tadpoles graze on algae, as do insects and

protozoans. Algae camouflage wood frog eggs from predators. And they form symbiotic relationships with spotted salamanders; salamander eggs receive oxygen while algae receive nutrients from waste products of developing embryos.

One late spring, filamentous algae began forming in our pond ... but quickly disappeared as dormant water lilies greened up. That's because algae aren't the only plants that need nutrients. As larger species absorb nitrogen and phosphorus to fuel spring growth, they keep algae from claiming too much and overwhelming ponds.

Around pond edges, plants create critical moist environments for toads, tree frogs and other amphibians who forage on land. It's important to stick to native species, though. Mott's team found that fallen leaves of invasive amur honeysuckle reduced water oxygen levels, increased phenolic compounds, led to reduced frog egg-laying and lower tadpole survival, and



Chipmunks, foxes, raccoons and other suburban wildlife often show up at ponds for a cooling drink.

virtually eliminated larvae from a once diverse community of aquatic insects.

ANIMALS KEEP THE BALANCE TOO

Fish-free, still-water ponds have an undeserved reputation for attracting mosquitoes. But fish aren't the only mosquito predators. "There are no extra mosquitoes in our yard," says Berrie. "The frogs are eating them all, and the dragonflies are eating them all."

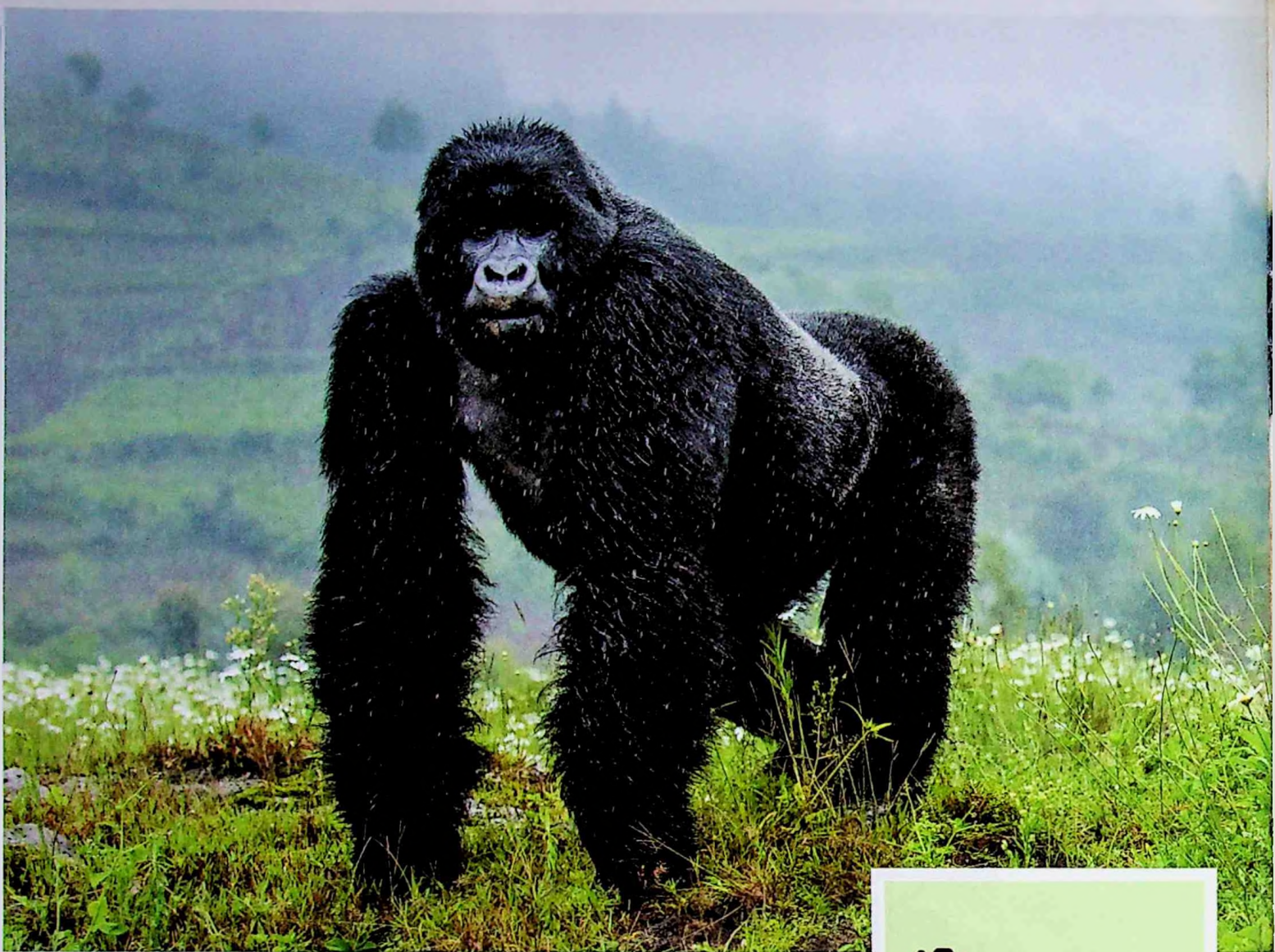
Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, but natural ponds are in constant motion. Water striders, predaceous diving beetles and frogs consume mosquito larvae. Dragonflies, some of whom can eat hundreds of mosquitoes daily, zip over the surface. Hummingbirds nab adult mosquitoes and feed them to their young.

At a time of rising temperatures and shrinking wetlands, our pond is also a life-saver for butterflies, mud dauber wasps, cardinals and sparrows, who all sip at the edges. Rabbits, foxes, deer, chipmunks and raccoons swing by for nighttime libations. Unfortunately, many homeowners use harmful products like netting to exclude some of these animals. But a humane pond is a 24-hour tavern that doesn't discriminate, welcoming all comers to its "messy," vibrant shores—and bringing far more beauty and life than a sterile, chemical-laden pond ever could.

Nancy Lawson is the author of The Humane Gardener and Wildscape.



Wildlife ponds should feature plenty of hiding places for their aquatic residents—think structural elements such as semi-submerged grasses, pieces of tree bark, rocks and fallen tree limbs. Surrounding the pond with lots of native plants also helps provide cover from predators.



SEEING MOUNTAIN GORILLAS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT with my wife, Wendy, was a longstanding bucket list item. In recent years, endangered mountain gorilla populations have increased largely because of heightened protection measures and responsible ecotourism that benefits the local economy and leads residents to support protection efforts. In November 2018, Wendy and I traveled to Uganda and Rwanda to see these amazing animals firsthand. During our final trek, a group of gorillas left the safe confines of Volcanoes National Park and ventured into the adjacent agricultural fields to feast on eucalyptus trees. This presented an unusual opportunity to photograph them in a more open space. As we followed the group at a respectful distance, I noticed this silverback standing on a ridge as the rest of the group moved ahead. To my surprise, he stopped—covered in a chilling drizzle of mist—to survey the mountain forests of his natural environment behind him and the planted fields that had once been his natural habitat surrounding him. After contemplating the scene, he descended to his group.

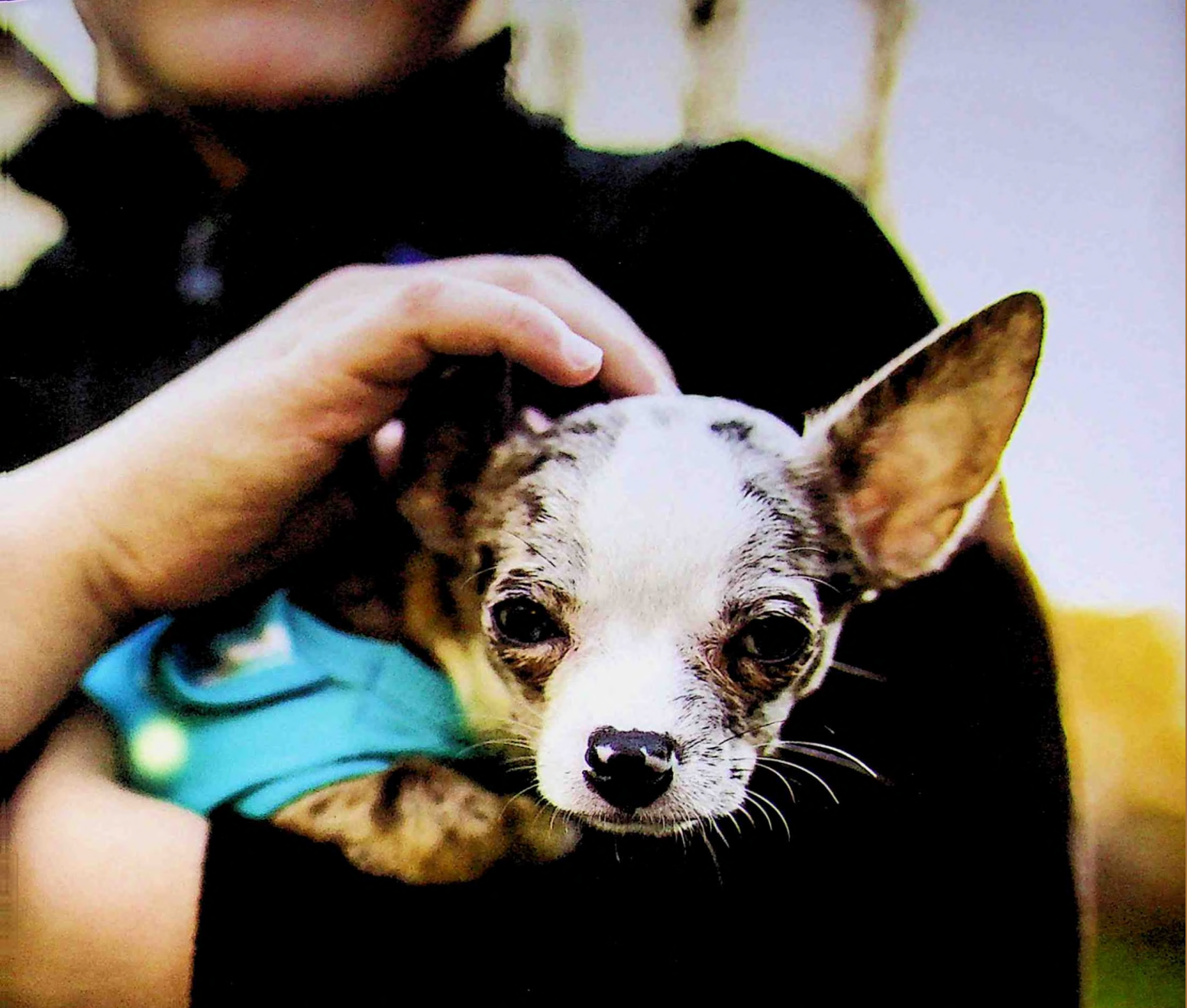
—GARY PRICE, MADISON, CONNECTICUT



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Bonnie and the
couple's foster
turned best
friend, Lottie

A universal love of animals

BONNIE MCEWAN AND HER HUSBAND, PETER PAPAY, grew up on opposite sides of the globe—she in Iowa, he in Hungary. Despite their unique backgrounds, they share a common love of animals that developed at an early age. As a boy, Peter nursed a slingshot-injured bird to health, and young Bonnie allotted a portion of her allowance to animal groups.

While serving in the United States Air Force, Bonnie and Peter noticed that animals often bridged divides of geography and culture. “An animal can provide a bond between two strangers, no matter where in the world they might be,” observes Bonnie, “from Austria to California, or Iceland to Scotland. Asking ‘May I pet your dog?’ leads to further conversation.” In fact, Peter’s German shepherd, Bundy, served as the couple’s own furry icebreaker.

Dogs, cats and birds—especially those in peril—occupy a special place in Bonnie’s and Peter’s hearts. The couple currently supports the Humane Society of the United States’ Animal Rescue

Team and recently included provisions for the team in their wills. “The HSUS is a beacon of hope during disasters,” says Peter. “We feel good knowing that our legacy will continue making this world a better place for the animals—and the people who love them.”

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